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NOTES AND NEWS.

SIR WILLIAM HUNTER, whose death we record with deep regret, was one of the men whose names will always take high rank in the history of British India. No more conscientious investigator of the facts of Indian life has ever put pen to paper, and if the British public is not wholly ignorant about India the credit is to no small extent his. The *Times* in the course of an appreciative memoir yesterday said :—

From his early days under a tent in Birbhum down to his last hours in his library near Oxford his adult life was a preparation for writing the history of India, which he was not destined to finish. Sorely against his inclination, he was compelled to realise that no individual, however laborious, could compass the entire field. He therefore abandoned the early period of Hindu and Mahometan ascendency, which assuredly requires no less than the later period to be reconsidered in the light of recent research, and devoted himself to tracing the growth of British dominion. The thoroughness of his methods of investigation may be seen in the first volume of his "History of British India," which appeared last year. This barely opens the subject, for it stops with the massacre of Amboyna in 1623, before the English company had founded its first settlements on the mainland of Hindustan. But the sample given is sufficient to enable us to realise what the bulk would have been, filling the five volumes that the author had sketched out. How much more is left in a state fit for publication we know not. Now that the master-mind is gone, it will not be easy for any successor to take up the dropped task.

Sir William Wilson Hunter was born in July, 1840. We must defer until next week more extended notice of the brilliant and useful career so suddenly brought to an end.

The rain which has at last fallen in the Punjab, the North-West Provinces and the Central Provinces has come too late to save the greater part of the crops, nor will it prevent famine; but something will be rescued and the water-famine will be sensibly relieved. According to the *Times of India* the rainfall, such as it is, has had no effect in checking the influx to the relief works. In Bombay no alleviation is possible till the next monsoon, and "the distress deepens daily." In Gujerat the slaughter of cattle for their bones and hides continues. In the Central Provinces "the gram, til, and cold-weather juar crops have completely failed," the wheat crops in the northern districts having alone benefited by the recent rains. In Hyderabad and the Berars the want of water grows worse. There and elsewhere "prices are rising, the agricultural stock are perishing, and the relief works are crowded. One piece of good news alone breaks the tale of woe. "Heavy falls of snow in the Himalayas assure a plentiful supply of canal water next year."

This gloomy picture presented to us by one of the leading Anglo-Indian newspapers is only too well borne out by other evidence. In the North-West Provinces, the money-lenders are refusing to lend on land, and will only buy at nominal rates. In some parts of the Central Provinces on the Bengal Nagpur Railway, the mail trains alone keep up their usual speed. The others have to go at a reduced speed because of the difficulty in obtaining water for the engines. Meantime, the number on the relief works keeps on increasing, despite Lord Curzon's circular. From Broach we hear that 45,000 are employed in the district, of whom 20,000 are working at the Mataria Tank. Even in Madras, though it lies outside the famine area, there is some drought and much misery. The railways, while lessening acute distress, spread the effect of scarcity over a wider area. Prices rise, especially along the railway lines. Where there has been drought, there is the greatest difficulty in paying taxes, and the *Hindu* appeals to the Government not to drive the people into the hands of the usurers.

"A former Famine Officer" contributes to the *Pioneer* and the *Friend of India* an interesting paper on the famine in Buldana, a district of Berar, containing 2,789 square miles and some half million of inhabitants. This is how he describes its present aspect :—

As regards the country itself it is the most arid looking desert that I have ever seen. On every side the fields have all been ploughed and prepared for sowing, but as far as the eye can reach there is not a blade of any kind to be seen. Of actual waste, *i.e.*, unoccupied land, there seems to be very little and in ordinary years the country is, I am told, extremely fertile. . . . There is not a drop of water to be seen anywhere. . . . Looking at this country as it is, I should say that I have never seen a country in a worse condition or with a more gloomy outlook, in which, ordinarily speaking, there can be no possible change, except for the worse, for at least six months.

Comparing the state of the district with that of Madras in 1876, he finds more grain in stock and the people looking in better condition, but a much greater want of water. The organisation of the camps he found deserving of great praise; but he thought that the numbers collected in one place dangerous to the public health, that more supervisors were wanted and he found that there were not enough hammers—the work was stone-breaking—to keep all employed.

This dismal picture of the position in Berar comes from an official who is a strong supporter of Lord Curzon's views on the necessity of limiting reliefs; but he is hardly prepared to accept Sir Richard Temple's doctrine that destitution should be a condition of succour. Sir Richard thus expressed himself to the writer of the paper :—

If a man comes and asks for relief you should tell him to go away and sell his plough, his bullocks, his field, and even his good cumbly, and then when he has got nothing more to sell he is a fit object of relief.

The writer found the people in Buldana better nourished than those he had to deal with in Madras in 1876. This perhaps only shows that in Madras they began too late. Sir Richard Temple declared that they began too early. Yet over 30 per cent. of the people in the taluk died.

No better is the account given by the *Mahratta* of a district, Bijapur, in another part of India. In one of the worst Talukas only 25,000 acres out of 300,000 are likely to yield a crop; and the other Talukas are nearly as bad. Hundreds of cattle are selling at a half or even a quarter of their usual price. Thousands of families have taken to begging and besiege every door. The bolder spirits have sought refuge in crime, and theft, robbery, and dacoity are everywhere on the increase. Peasants have even been murdered while watching their few remaining ears of corn. But the Government still declines to open relief works. It contents itself with increasing the police. And though famine has unmistakeably established itself it has not yet been officially declared. The *Mahratta* cries out for the organisation of relief.

"The famine of 1900 is due to the absence of the accustomed rainfall during the autumn of 1899." Such is the first sentence of the Memorandum on the famine which the Secretary of State for India communicated (Jan. 30) to the Lord Mayor in view of the opening of a Mansion House Famine Relief Fund. It represents exactly the official view of the calamity, and it forms an admirable ground of appeal to the British public. The distress is "inevitable"; it is the hand of Fate—Destiny—Providence, inexorable and inscrutable. Let the British public be informed duly by the Lord Mayor, and let them contribute sympathetically. But then let them proceed a step farther. Mr. Bryce dealt vigorously with the "in-

evitable" plea as advanced in connexion with the Transvaal War, and pointed out that not only the outbreak of hostilities, the unpreparedness of the British, the reverses of the campaign, and all the rest of it, might be called "inevitable," but also the indignation of the British public. So in regard to the famine. The failure of the rains was "inevitable"; the unpreparedness of the Government (for so extensive and severe an attack) was "inevitable"; the reverses of the campaign were "inevitable." But so also the indignation of the British public is "inevitable."

For, though the rains cannot be compelled at will (except by a large scheme of re-afforestation), yet the dire effects of famine were undoubtedly preventible, but for the fixed idea of the Government that the full and final explanation and justification lies in recurrent droughts. Given the certainty of recurrent droughts, what has the Government done to meet the situation? Drought is but the occasion of famine; what has the Government done to discover and to combat the real causes? Not till 1878 did it occur to the Government that anything could be done except in the way of remedy; and the Commission of that year, as we have already pointed out, made some recommendations for mitigation and prevention, meagre and inefficacious, indeed, yet they constituted a step in advance. But what has the Government done to put them in execution? What effect have they had in preventing or mitigating the severity and extent of the famine now raging? The rayat's stores of old time are gone. He goes down at the first breath of famine. Why not put him in a condition to resist? Why, because he must provide for an extravagant official policy in warlike expeditions, in unnecessary or injudicious railways, in overpaid administration, and so forth. There is plenty of food within the borders of India; there are plenty of railways to distribute the food. Lord George Hamilton's Memorandum says so. The real pinch is that the people have so little money to buy the food. The continuous declension of their powers of resistance is marked by the rise of the numbers on relief. If the British public require a reason for indignation, let them compel a full investigation of the causes of the dire and growing poverty of the Indian people under "the most beneficent government the world has ever seen."

The Lord Mayor's Fund, Lord George Hamilton says, "will mainly be devoted" to help the village people "in regaining their property." That is to say, it will be applied to aid them in re-stocking their little holdings, for "so far as can be foreseen the loss of plough and milch cattle will this season be greater in many parts of the famine area than on any similar occasion as to which we have full returns." Yes, we have already shown how terrible is the mortality and the depreciation of cattle, and how heavy are the trains that bring hides to the seaports. It is worse than the devastation of a frontier district when cattle are impressed for a trans-frontier expedition. The significance of it is seen when we remember that the territory affected by the famine is all but wholly agricultural, the small local industries having disappeared in the ravages of civilisation. Our own agricultural districts ought to feel not a little sympathy, and, if they be still able, to contribute accordingly. In any case a very serious duty lies on the British public generally, and we trust the Mansion House Fund will justify the anticipatory gratitude of the Indian people.

The capable writer on "Indian Affairs" in the *Times* welcomes the sympathy of the Indians displayed on the occasion of the Transvaal war "as showing that somewhere deep down in their consciousness is the conviction of having a common cause with the Empire—an underlying sense of solidarity that may yet leaven the democratic ambitions which our Indian Universities foster, but which no Indian Government with a due regard to the actual needs of the general population can at present altogether fulfil." The obvious fact is that such a conviction is deep and strong, and that the people are not only willing but most anxious to co-operate in the "common cause" if our mightily superior officialdom would only permit them. If the Government cannot at present "altogether fulfil" the expectations of "the democratic ambitions" that it fosters, that need be no bar to its fulfilling them in some measure more ample and satisfying than now. We have inevitably created them; we are bound inevitably to fulfil them in reasonable degree, and with reasonable promptitude. The only obstacle lies in the overweening depreciation of Indian capacity and Indian loyalty which has been manifested in deplorable ways and to an unparalleled extent in the past few years. Let this mischievous folly be reformed altogether.

The same writer, after dealing with the famine, remarks that "the truth is that, throughout India, the increase of population has compelled the tillage of soils and the resort to localities which were not formerly cultivated." We do not wish to argue for the hundredth time the allegation of over-population, which we have already ninety and nine times shown to be groundless. But this migration has no doubt taken place to a certain extent, and, before discussing it, we should like to know exactly to what extent. "The result," says the *Times* writer, "has been an economic rise in rent or land revenue, which by no means implies a greater power of the peasants to pay it." Further:—

> The truth is that the increase of the population is placing the peasantry more and more at the mercy of the landed proprietor, and of the Government, who in many provinces of India stands in his place. The Indian Legislature has recognised this fact by imposing severe restrictions on the landed proprietors as regards the raising of rents; and an authoritative statement would be very welcome showing that the Government has observed similar restrictions in regard to the enhancement of revenue.

Very welcome, certainly; but, in order to carry conviction, it would have to be accompanied by sufficient details. It is all right and proper for the Government to look after the landed proprietors, and we are glad the *Times* contributor joins in the desire to look after the Government. The danger he discerns in the situation has only too frequently been the subject of remark in these columns. We are by no means sanguine that any such statement as he desiderates will be forthcoming; and still less sanguine that it will be supported by particulars. Of course, it ought to apply not only to the new and inferior tracts to which it is alleged that people have been driven, nor solely to the famine tracts, but to the whole country.

We referred in our last issue to the *Pioneer's* denial of Mr. Dutt's charge of over-assessment. Mr. Nundy now writes to the same journal to say that he has searched the Famine Commission's Report without being able to find any passage to the effect that that body estimated the land-tax at from 3 to 7 per cent. of the produce. The nearest approach he can find is the following:—

> It is estimated that the assessment falls on varying soils, and according to the different productiveness of different years at from 3 to 16 per cent. on the value of the produce.

This estimate was made over twenty years ago. Now it is known from official data that in seven years (1888–1895) the Punjab land revenue increased by 12 per cent., and the rentals in the Central and North-West Provinces by 15 and 18 per cent. respectively. On the other hand, the rentals in Bengal increased by only 19 per cent. in twenty-two years, or at the rate of about six per cent. for seven years. Mr. Nundy then goes on to bring forward evidence that the assessment is "generally harsh and excessive." The *Pioneer* itself at the time of the Moplah riots quoted Mr. Logan as saying that the discontent was due to the oppressions and exactions of the system of land tenure. So, too, the Deccan riots were traced to an over-estimate of its resources acted upon by the early collectors. Even the Famine Commission give among the causes of the indebtedness of landholders "administrative errors, such as unsuitable revenue settlements."

The Sessions Judge of Satara recently had before him a woman who had thrown her new-born child into a prickly-pear bush, where it was found eight or ten hours later by the village *patel*. Said the Sessions Judge:—

> Its exiguous chance of life was not improbably diminished by the too official action of the *patel*, who seemed to consider the execution of the *panchnama* a matter of more immediate moment than the preservation of the child; and it is doubtful, too, whether the well-meant efforts of the nurse to whom it was consigned were as efficacious as a less traditional manner of treatment might have been.

As the *patel* seems to have acted for the best, as well as the nurse, we cannot agree with the *Indian Spectator* that he "should have been placed in the dock beside the woman who did the thing." But we agree warmly with our con-

temporary's questions: "Why did the woman expose the child? Was it poverty or infamy that prompted that unmotherly act? Or was it insanity?" The motive, strangely enough, does not seem to have been made public. The sentence of the woman to transportation for life is shocking, and ought not to stand without revision. We are not surprised at the terrible comment of the *Indian Spectator*:—

> One often wonders why a Government such as ours, with high ideals and generous intentions, is not able to do more good than it has been doing. The explanation is that all these high ideals are arrested when they approach the people by an impervious stratum of unintelligent, not to say inhuman, subordinates.

This fearful explanation, deliberately set out by an Indian writer of marked self-restraint and of pronounced British leanings, ought to command attention in high places. It is an explanation that goes far.

Commenting on Mr. Justice Ranade's address, the *Times of India* warns him that for any purpose other than social reform a union of Moslems and Hindus is impossible. But, as the *Mahratta* points out, union is easier in politics than in social matters. The two races must unite if they desire any political advancement. The Mahometans have been wont to believe themselves especially favoured by the Government, but they will be disillusioned before long unless they are prepared to be satisfied for ever with honeyed phrases.

> The Anglo-Indian Press may pat them for their aloofness from political agitation, but when it comes to the point the Mahometans will not be found to possess even one shade of colour the less than his Hindu and Parsee brother, the colour we mean, which disentitles one to political liberty.

And there are many signs that the Mahometans are already learning the lesson.

The crusade against municipal self-government appears to be going on with undiminished vigour. Now it is the turn of the Dacca municipality. In the annual Administration Report, it is said, the authorities remarked that the elected Commissioners had always stood in the way of the improvement of the town. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* says:—

> A correspondent now tells us that the Commissioners are shortly to address their Chairman protesting against these remarks and calling upon him to state specifically the occasions when they have in any way put any obstacles in the way of the improvement of the town.

As the *Patrika* says, "the result of this correspondence will indeed be watched anxiously by all who take any interest in the cause of local self-government in the Mofussil." It is extremely unfortunate that there is so little consideration displayed in official circles for the feelings, as well as for the unselfish labours, of the Native Commissioners of municipalities. But the ukase, apparently, has gone forth, and it must be justified somehow.

The glorification of outgoing Governors, which originated with the admirers of Lord Lansdowne, has landed Lord Sandhurst in an unhappy situation. With more friendliness than judgment, it was proposed to present to the departing Governor of Bombay a public address, and a few of his friends met to take steps for the purpose. Let the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* tell what happened.

> That a Governor has friends is not at all surprising. But when these friends meet in conclave and by a majority of 27 to 1 decide that the object of their admiration cannot have a public memorial, it is, we believe, the worst case of "Save me from my friends!". . . . The assembled gentlemen, all friends and admirers of the Governor, decided that the public should not be invited to vote an address for his Excellency.

Another attempt was made in the Bombay Corporation. Mr. Wacha, however, drew attention to the well-known state of public opinion, and he was supported by Mr. Dixit. The resolution was carried by 10 votes to 1, but the majority (14) of the members present declined to vote. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* says:—

> It is patent to everyone who has watched public events in Bombay for the last five years that his Excellency's Government has done an amount of mischief, not only to the people of Bombay but to the whole of India, which is incalculable and irreparable, and it is no consolation to learn that the mischief was due more to his amiable traits than to perversity. That being the case, we, as Hindus, would still be quite prepared to let his lordship go away from amongst us without making any fuss about his failure as a ruler. But alas! his friends and admirers seem to be determined to tax the patience of the people to the extreme.

This is sufficiently pitiable, in every respect. All the same, Lord Sandhurst will, no doubt, be fêted and complimented when he comes home. The lesson will hardly be laid to heart by the Government, which still imagines that growing and grown peoples can be adequately ruled by titled mediocrities.

To ourselves there is nothing surprising in the demonstration of Indian loyalty at Calcutta on January 28. We are gratified, however, that the Calcutta correspondent of the *Times* should discern in it, and acknowledge that he discerns in it, "a striking indication of the state of Native public opinion"; and also that "Native public opinion" should be deemed worthy of attention. The correspondent telegraphed (January 28):—

> Every reverse in South Africa has only served to confirm the loyalty of the chiefs and people, and to increase the desire of the military classes to take a share in the war. Popular sympathy is unquestionably with the troops, the daily list of casualties, as the Mahárájá of Darbhanga so well put it, serving to wring the heart-strings of everyone.

The report shows how representative Hindus and Mahometans vied with each other in "loyalty, attachment, and devotion to the British Crown." Some 63,000 rupees were subscribed, making already a total of about £40,000 from India to the Transvaal war funds. The *Morning Herald* (London) boldly asks (January 31): "Who will dare talk of a disloyal India after this?" We shall take note.

The signallers' strike on the G.I.P. Railway is almost forgotten, but a fortunate sequel has thrown an instructive light on the capacity of the Anglo-Indian Press to see sedition, conspiracy and racial feeling everywhere. It will be remembered that the *Times of India* attributed the strike, not to any real grievances, but to a conspiracy of Mahratta Brahmans whose true object was to confine employment on the railway to men of their own caste. This view of the affair was persisted in even after it was shown that there were men of other castes—nay, even some Christians—among the strikers. Well, the strike failed. The men petitioned for reinstatement, and about seventy have been taken on already. But the most instructive point is that the Home Board of the Company, though it had refused to consider the men's demands during the strike, have now issued orders that they should be reinstated as vacancies occur on the ground that the men had some legitimate grievances which should have been redressed. But if they had legitimate grievances, what becomes of the Mahratta conspiracy?

A correspondent of the *Bengalee* is responsible for the following story. Mr. J. C. Lloyd, Sub-Deputy Magistrate at Chaibassa, had a dispute in court with Babu Rakhal Chandra Chatterjee, a pleader. The next morning he belaboured the babu with a stick outside his court. The pleader immediately complained to the Deputy Commissioner and also to Mr. Forbes, Commissioner of the Chota Nagpur Division, who was then at Chaibassa. Before the Deputy Commissioner Mr. Lloyd feigned madness, and the pleader on the advice of the authorities left the matter in their hands. Mr. Lloyd—madness or no madness—has since been transferred to Bhagalpur. The correspondent adds that this is a very healthy station.

Mr. Tim Healy in the course of his speech in the House of Commons on Wednesday seems to have given a mordant summary of the annexation of Burma. The passage is thus described by the writer of the Parliamentary Sketch in the *Morning Leader*:—

> And then Mr. Healy told the House a parable, and told it so inimitably that friend and foe had to roar with laughter. It was something like this: "In 1879 the Government of the day wanted to annex Burma, and so that sound friend of the British Constitution, Reuter, sent from Rangoon or Mandalay a telegram, 'King Theebaw is drinking.' Two days elapsed, and another message arrived, 'King Theebaw is still drinking.' A little later a further telegram announced that King Theebaw had murdered his mother-in-law and three maiden aunts." Roars of laughter stopped Mr. Healy for a moment, and then he took up his parable again—"The Conservatives went out and Mr. Gladstone came in, and as the play-bills say 'five years elapse.' Nothing was heard about King Theebaw's intemperance, or his butchered maiden aunts. But no sooner had Mr. Gladstone been defeated on something to do with Irish whisky than the faithful Reuter, after five years' silence, flashed this message to England: 'King Theebaw is still drinking!' So you took Burma, and your claims to Johannesburg and the Rand are about as respectable." No written description can do justice to the manner in which Mr. Healy gazed over his glasses as in solemn tones he kept chanting that refrain "King Theebaw is still drinking!"

INDIA AND THE WAR.

THE war with the South African Republics cannot fail to have wide and lasting effects, bringing good or ill to distant nations and generations still unborn—not least to India which finds its fortunes bound up so curiously with those of an island of the West. But it will be noticed that though the fortunes of the two countries are bound together, they do not of necessity rise and fall together; for it is often in the hour of adversity that the members of one household are the more ready to value each other's help and to treat each other with generosity and justice. If we put aside those overwhelming catastrophes in which the whole household must perish together, a time of stress and humiliation is the time when friendship is most prized and confidence is best rewarded. The immediate effects of the war on India have already been chronicled, and they have been partly good and partly evil. If amid their own misfortunes the English public have shown themselves less eager than they were three years ago to help the famine-stricken, on the other hand the depleted Treasury of India has gained by the removal of a large body of troops to Natal. For very shame the people of that colony, who have seen their homes protected by soldiers so long maintained by the taxpayers of India, and their wounded succoured by Indian bearers, cannot persist in the unjust legislation by which their Indian fellow-subjects have been oppressed. Nor can the readiness shown by the Indian Army to fight for England have failed to evoke some answering feelings of sympathy and respect among the people of these islands. How far all this will be permanent it is difficult to say. It may be that when the danger is past India will again be burdened with a British army admittedly larger than is needed there, to be kept at the expense of the poorest portion of the Empire to fight in defence of the rest. It may be that the people of Natal will forget all that they owe to India, and will sacrifice justice and humanity to the jealousy of petty traders. It may be that the active loyalty of the Indians will be repaid by new laws against sedition and by further curtailments of the few liberties they yet possess. But there are not wanting some signs, full of hope for India, that the lessons of the war will not be soon forgotten, that besides these immediate effects there are others of a still deeper kind, and that England will emerge from her sufferings more ready to walk in the paths of righteousness, to love justice more than domination, and to follow after the things that make for peace.

It is certainly not our intention to deal with the question of the justice or necessity of the war. It is sufficient for our purpose to recall the spirit, both among statesmen and people, with which it was commenced. A brave enemy despised and maligned, a diplomacy of flouts and gibes, a disregard of the natural feelings of our fellow-citizens of Dutch descent—such were its earlier manifestations. But more serious still to the people of India was the evident determination to make the unity, power and glory of the English race the main bond of Empire. Though invoked with singular inappropriateness by the cosmopolitan financiers and adventurers of the Rand, the outraged dignity of the Anglo-Saxon race has played the chief part both in official apologies and popular outcries. But it would be a mistake to suppose that this spirit of domination and imperial braggadocio has only just been evoked by the events of the last few months. The desire to bend other races to our will has been growing steadily for a generation at least. It has fed and thrived on the easy conquest of savage enemies; its nakedness has been hidden by pious wishes for the reformation of backward peoples; and its ultimate aims have been thought justified by the obvious superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race over all other races, living or dead. In its earlier course it had, indeed, to encounter some obstacles—feelings of sympathy and fraternity, respect for the freedom of others, a love of peace, and a belief that all was not perfect in England itself, and that there, and not in distant lands, the reformer could find work in plenty. But the forces of Imperialism, financed by the exploiters of South Africa, proved for the moment the more powerful. The natural results followed. Everywhere throughout the Empire the subject races became of less account; everywhere the Anglo-Saxon domination became more and more an empire of force. Even England itself did not escape, and the rod that it had prepared for others was ready for its own back. While the masses, whose own fathers had only obtained a vote in 1867 or 1885, were shouting for the redress of the Outlanders' grievances—Englishmen kept from the polling-booth by villain Dutch—an ominous talk of conscription was heard in official circles, and now it would seem that the especial mark of English liberty, that freedom from the compulsory military service to which the nations of the Continent have to submit, may be surrendered. So Imperialism moves forward to its last and greatest triumph—the enslavement of England.

As this spirit grew more and more in the ascendant, it may be imagined that the position of the Indian people grew steadily worse. In theory, indeed, there was much in the Imperial conception to reconcile the Indians to it. A world-wide Empire, built upon the assured foundation of equal justice, each part ready to defend every other, a brotherhood of fellow-citizens and fellow-subjects with equal rights in each other's lands might well foster hope rather than despair amongst the Indians. But in practice the Imperial idea is rather the expression of three propositions each one of which cannot fail to be resented by all subject peoples: (1) the Empire is the work and possession of the English race; (2) that race is not only the greatest and noblest that exists or ever has existed—that might be allowed—but has a heaven-sent mission to rule, reform, and civilise all other races; (3) and as a consequence of the foregoing, the power and glory of the British Empire is to be maintained and extended at all costs, and any aspirations in the subject peoples that appear to conflict therewith must be ruthlessly suppressed. How this policy has been enforced in India the history of the last few years shows only too clearly. The vision that passed before the eyes of an earlier generation, of an India trained by us to share our liberties, has given place to another in which not even a municipality should be Indian; in which the freedom of the Press should be at an end; and arbitrary imprisonment without trial a natural resource in times of difficulty. But worse than all has been the growing separation of the two races. There was perhaps never a time when the Englishman and the Indian thoroughly respected and understood each other, when the least respectable members of the ruling race did not use their position to insult their Indian fellow-subjects; but there were always some who rose above these prejudices, and unfortunately the number of the just seems to grow smaller and smaller. There have been many causes for this state of affairs and more generally for the growing distance between the two races. But they have been reinforced, excused, nay even justified in the eyes of Imperialists by the vainglorious maxims of imperial domination. There may be reasons for dwelling on the virtues of the crushed and the unfortunate, but the English with their glorious past, their power and their prosperity are surely in no need of such tonics. Is there not rather a danger lest, like some despot of old, their character may be debased by incessant flattery?

But, whatever has been the progress of Imperialism, there are not wanting signs that it has already passed its zenith and that its decline has begun. The movement is slow, and almost imperceptible, the indications are slight and may not be lasting, but such as they are, they are all in one direction; and it seems possible that the war, which was heralded as the great triumph of the Imperial idea, may mark the commencement of its downfall. That the reverses of the hour have had their share in this change, and that a series of victories would put renewed heart into those who believe that the honour of England depends on conquest and dominion, it would be idle to deny; but, meantime, the opponents of Imperialism have taken courage. Men have begun to ask themselves whether the policy that has landed us in this war may not bring us to numberless others, whether the true glory of England depends on her fighting prowess, and whether the cost of Empire is worth the gain. For it is now seen that England will have to pay a heavy bill not in money only but in men, and that liberty as well as life may have in the end to be sacrificed. Imperialism has come forth out of the shadow of empty and magniloquent phrases; it has come forth into the light of fact; and however numerous may be its defenders, it will for the future never want opponents.

So far then the war, whatever its ultimate result and however complete the British victory, can scarcely fail to weaken the spirit of domination; and to that extent it will

bring new hope to India. As the desire to dictate to others declines in England, as the old love of liberty revives, it will be possible once again to arouse in England a generous enthusiasm, and a generous wish to help the oppressed. Then it may be hoped that a new interest will arise in the misfortunes of our chief dependency, a new desire to extend to India some of the blessings we ourselves enjoy. The nation will be in a better temper to recognise what is good in Indian character and civilisation. The reactionary policy of the past few years will come to an end, and the rulers of India will take up again the great work of extending to our Indian fellow-subjects the liberties we boast. Possibly we shall then be so little preoccupied by war that we shall be able not only to help the famine-stricken, but to consider how to set about the prevention of famine. Possibly, too, we shall be so little under the dominion of race-feeling as to welcome Indians to the highest posts in their native land. And certainly, if that day comes, we shall find that the bonds which unite us with India are stronger and not weaker than they have ever been before.

THE BRITISH INDIAN GARRISON.

ON the occasion of the dispatch of some 10,000 British troops from Indian stations to take part in the South African campaign we discussed the situation thereupon arising, with special reference to the excess of the British garrison in India and to the injustice of charging India with the expenses of troops constituting in reality an Imperial reserve (INDIA, vol. xii, p. 192, Oct. 20, 1899). We then set out the main points of the case, and expressed a hope that they would be insistently driven home in Parliament. We are therefore glad to observe that, as we intimated last week, Mr. Herbert Roberts has placed on the Order Paper of the House of Commons an amendment to the Address representing the necessity of relieving the Indian Exchequer "from some portion of the large military expenditure incurred by the maintenance" of the British garrison. The ground of this demand for relief is described as "the constantly recurring and costly famines in India." The claim might fairly be said to rest on grounds of equity, but there can be no doubt whatever that it is distinctly accentuated by the calamity of famine, and all the more so as famine is becoming ominously frequent, widespread, and severe. The extent of relief claimed in Mr. Roberts's amendment is "that 20,000 of the British troops stationed in India shall in future be treated as a reserve force for your Majesty's Empire in the East generally, and shall be charged upon the Imperial revenues." We do not know on what grounds the figure is fixed by Mr. Roberts at 20,000, but it is possibly suggested by the fact that now the contingent from India to South Africa is somewhere well on towards that number—say 15,000—and more may yet follow. Anyhow, we are pleased to see that the question is to be raised, and we shall be interested to observe the attitude of the Secretary of State in the discussion.

One figure, of course, will raise the question just as well as another, and 20,000 may be safely considered a minimum. For a just settlement, however, it would probably be necessary to have an enquiry into the wide variety of circumstances relevant to a satisfactory decision. There is no desire anywhere, we venture to say, to weaken the British garrison for its proper duties. Everyone recognises fully that the internal peace and the external defence of the country must be provided for sufficiently, and even amply. It would be the height of folly to underman the garrison so as to give head, or to suggest foolish and mischievous hopes, either to internal discontent or to external aggression. But, on the other hand, it is a serious matter, especially in these days of famine, plague, and multiplied distress, to burden India, which at best is so miserably poor, with a heavier load of military expenditure than is reasonably necessary for her requirements. The physical configuration of the North-West, the independent spirit of the tribesmen beyond the border, and the unquestionable Indian preference of British to any other alien rule, combine to offer the strongest possible dissuasion to any European Power from aggressive intentions. We have, presumably, no aggressive intentions ourselves; certainly India has none. It is very evident, then, that only a defensive force is necessary, and that such a force need not be a large one. Internally, it is true, as Lord George Hamilton says, that the area of territory to be protected and kept in order is very extensive; and in that point of view the army is not markedly excessive. That, however, is by no means the right point of view; what is to be looked at is the massing of the population, and the temper of the various races and centres. There can be no doubt at all that, if the Government would but permit the free development of the activities of the people, and keep its officials rigidly from fostering racial divisions, there is no country under the sun that has less need of an army to guarantee the peace and the cause of law and order.

The existing establishment is based on the conclusions of the Royal Commission of Enquiry of 1859, which settled it in full view of the disturbed condition of the country subsequently to the Mutiny. But the Mutiny was a revolt of one of the Native armies; it was in no sense an insurrection of the country—on the contrary, the loyalty of the country, and indeed of a large proportion of the Native troops, was the salvation of the situation. In fact, there would have been no Mutiny at all, if our officials had shown the faintest regard for the prejudices of the Native soldiers, or even if they had taken prompt and decisive action at the first symptoms of dissatisfaction. To saddle the country with an army constituted to deal with another Mutiny is simply a preposterous *non sequitur*; and, at any rate, to keep up the system for nearly half a century, when the anxious and enthusiastic loyalty of the people is beyond all rational question, is both pusillanimous and oppressive, as well as unintelligent. We have an establishment now of some 74,000 British troops and 146,000 Native troops, a proportion of 1 to 2, whereas before the Mutiny the proportion was 1 to 5 at most. We have already shown that in 1897 there was an excess of more than 11,000 British troops over the standard set up in 1859—an excess involving a needless cost of more than a million and a half on the Indian treasury. Before Lord Curzon had taken his Viceregal bearings, he asserted emphatically in Council that during his reign the Indian army should not be diminished by one British soldier. The outcry of the Natalians, however, urged the Government at home to despatch 10,000 British troops to South Africa, and now some 5,000 more are on the way, if not there already. If public opinion in India had been regarded, the contingent would have been very much larger. Even the most English Anglo-Indian journals supported the public view, the *Pioneer* itself pointing out obvious sources of contribution. But the Home Government has been exceedingly reluctant to spoil its plausible—and rotten—argument for the maintenance of an excessive British element on the Indian establishment.

In order to show how unfairly India has been treated during the past forty years, we reproduce on the authority of a White-Book of 1896 (C.—8131) the following statement of occasions on which India has lent troops :—

Year.	Purpose.	Prime Minister.	Payment by India.
1859-60	China Expenditure ...	Lord Palmerston ...	*Nil.*
1860-61	New Zealand	Lord Palmerston ...	Ordinary expenses.
1867	Abyssinian Expedition	Lord Derby	Ordinary expenses.
1875	Perak Expedition	Mr. Disraeli	Ordinary expenses.
1878	Malta	Lord Beaconsfield ...	*Nil.*
1878	Afghan War	Lord Beaconsfield ...	Whole expenditure *less* 5 millions.
1882	Egypt	Mr. Gladstone	Whole expenditure *less* £500,000.
1885	Sudan Expedition ...	Mr. Gladstone	Ordinary expenses.
1896 (Mar.)	Mombasa	Lord Salisbury	*Nil.*
1896 (May)	Suakin	Lord Salisbury	Ordinary expenses.

On the present occasion, the whole of the expenses, ordinary and extraordinary, are to be paid from the Imperial Exchequer. But that, though so far right and proper, does not touch the essence of the Indian grievance, which has been set forth in many successive resolutions of the Indian National Congress, and elsewhere. Here is an excess force in India maintained by Indian money, not for Indian needs, but obviously as an Imperial reserve for convenient use in British complications in the East and South. Let us recall the Minute of Sir James Peile and Sir Donald Stewart, entered on the Proceedings of the Secretary of State in Council on May 16, 1896 ("Return of Opinions and Reasons," No. 236), "with reference to the expenses of the troops to be despatched to Africa in aid of the Egyptian troops" :—

In the present case we do not find that India has a direct and

substantial interest in the recovery of the Sudan by Egypt. The Egyptian Government and the Canal were not in any danger. . . . India has come into the matter accidentally. It was found that the forces of Egypt did not suffice both to take the field and to hold Suakin. If Suakin had been blessed with a good climate, no doubt English regiments would have been sent there, and, if they had, it cannot be contended that India would have been required to contribute. . . . The argument addressed to India is: "You would have had to pay if the troops had not been sent, so it makes no difference." But surely there is a great difference between paying your own men for doing your own work in your own country and paying the same men for doing other people's work in a foreign country. . . . When the interest of India is questionable and open to argument, it is sound policy in the English Government to incline to the more liberal view.

The importance of the Cape as a half-way house has not been seriously argued on the present occasion, and the question of contribution has not arisen. But the argument of Sir James Peile and Sir Donald Stewart applies with irresistible force to the grim list above, and places the justice of the British Government—the "trustees" of India—in an unenviable light. There is yet time and opportunity for reparation.

"What we cannot and dare not do for Great Britain," exclaimed Sir Henry Fowler (June 15, 1899), "we have no right to do in India." Very well; let us take this matter home to ourselves. Such a proceeding could not and dare not be done for Great Britain, but it is done for India. Not only is it grossly unjust and oppressive to India, but it is thoroughly bad for Great Britain herself; and it would not be tolerated for an instant if the British public knew and realised the facts. Let us repeat what Lord Salisbury (than Lord Cranborne) said in 1867, in support of Mr. Fawcett's amendment against the imposition of any charge on the Indian revenues in respect of Indian troops employed in the Abyssinian expedition.

I do not like India to be looked upon as an English barracks in the Oriental seas from which we may draw any number of troops without paying for them. It is bad for England, because it is always bad for us not to have a check upon the temptation to engage in little wars, which can only be controlled by the necessity of paying for them. . . . If this garrison which we keep in India is, as all authorities assure us, necessary for maintaining that country in security and peace, that garrison ought not to be rashly diminished. If, on the other hand, it is too large, and India can for any length of time conveniently spare these troops, then the Indian population ought not to be so unnecessarily taxed.

We trust then, as we said before, that this question will be thoroughly ventilated in the House, and that there wil be shown a sufficient force of truly Imperial opinion on both sides to compel a full investigation of this grievance of India. Mansion House charity is all very well in its way, but Imperial justice is still better, and it could not be displayed at a more opportune time whether for India's needs or for Britain's prestige.

OUR LONDON LETTER.

WESTMINSTER, Thursday.

After a week of more or less futile talk, the debate on Lord E. Fitzmaurice's vote of censure culminated on Tuesday in a scene that will live in the memory of all who witnessed it, and which is perhaps destined to serve some future Carlyle as an illustration of the ironic genius of history. Mr. Balfour was standing at the Table flushed with the triumph of the Ministerial majority at York, elated, too, by the consciousness of his approaching victory in the division lobbies of the House of Commons. Behind him sat Mr. Chamberlain, whose self-proclaimed impeccability in a Government of self-confessed blunderers had only a few hours before given a shock to the iron nerves of Mr. Asquith. This was the moment chosen by Mr. Balfour for one of the most inflated eulogies ever passed by one Minister on another. Scoffers have sometimes made fun of the Colonial Secretary by hailing him as the discoverer of the British Empire. Mr. Balfour took up the sneer and applied it in solemn earnest. A tumult of laughter rang through the House. There were but three grave faces in the assembly—those of the over-zealous orator, the new Columbus himself, and his henchman from Bordesley. Mr. Chamberlain, to do him justice, looked uncomfortable as well as grave, and there are some who say that if he did not actually blush there was at least a passing reflection in the pale face from the glow of a particularly fiery orchid.

Events may prove, even before the advent of a second Carlyle, that the apotheosis of Mr. Chamberlain was somewhat premature. He has still to meet certain allegation brought against the Colonial Office of direct complicity in the Jameson conspiracy. Sir William Harcourt's dignified appeal for an authoritative vindication of the Government in this matter was met the other night by the pompous retort that for the present Mr. Chamberlain had higher and more important duties to perform. Within the next fortnight, however, Ministers will have to face a demand for the re-opening of the abortive enquiry, and unless a more satisfactory answer is then given to the slanders—as Sir William Harcourt hopefully describes the rumours that have lately agitated every capital in Europe—the Government may find it difficult to restrain an ebullition of feeling from their own benches. Even in the height of the war fever the majorities recorded at Westminster during the last few days will dwindle to nothing if the slur of the Hawksley dossier is not speedily expunged.

While no new reputations have been made in the course of the debate, some old ones have been damaged and others have acquired fresh lustre. Mr. Balfour's is one of those that would seem to have entered on their post-meridian stage. The Conservative leader can still be trusted to deliver clever debating speeches, while in the art of turning political passion to party advantage he is almost a past-master. But he has little or no sense of responsibility. Take, as an illustration of the ingrained levity of his mind, a curious scene enacted in the House of Commons last Thursday. Sir Edward Grey, speaking under the stimulus of Lord Rosebery's presence—the ex-Prime Minister was in the Peers' Gallery—had just concluded a scathing criticism of the famous Manchester apologia. It was a speech that called for an immediate reply, and Mr. Goschen had been taking notes with that purpose in view. But Mr. Balfour had been touched on the raw. With that feline refinement of spite which is sometimes to be detected in his hastier impulses he decreed that the presumptuous critic should be ignored. A kind of paralysis crept over the House when it was seen that no member of the Treasury bench was rising to speak. A moment later, except for the interposition of Mr. Labouchere, and there would have been a division on the amendment, and in that division the life of the Government might have been imperilled. In fact, it was Mr. Labouchere who unwittingly saved Mr. Balfour.

Strange to say, the leader of the House appeared to be quite unconscious of the peril. He pressed for an immediate division and was only brought to a sense of the temerity of his action by a vigorous though private remonstrance from the chief Ministerial Whip. Sir William Walrond's galvanic energy made a welcome addition to the comedy of the scene. While he was scouring the Government benches trying to stir up an orator, Mr. Balfour was engaged in reproaching the Opposition with undue and unpatriotic loquacity. At this very moment, as an incidental division showed, the Government were in a bare majority. Mr. Balfour, carried away by his resentment, had not thought of that. But what are other people to think of a leader who to gratify a sudden whim is capable of so rash a manœuvre? From the Ministerial point of view it was of the first importance that the Government should defeat the vote of censure by an overwhelming majority; yet here was Mr. Balfour airily suggesting a premature division, ignorant or careless of the fact that most of his supporters had one home to bed while the Opposition were still present in force. Ministerialists have not been sparing in their comments on the incident. Had the Liberals been less merciful or more quick-witted they might have snatched from the Conservative leader's petulance a party advantage that would have ruined for ever his reputation as a Parliamentarian.

What can be the explanation of Mr. Wyndham's oratorical success? His speech in defence of the War Office, although it has since been riddled by expert criticism, evoked at the time a perfect chorus of praise. Mr. Balfour at the close of the deliverance shook hands with his former private secretary, while the Chancellor of the Exchequer patted the blushing hero on the shoulder. He was complimented, too, by Sir William Harcourt and Sir Edward Grey, from either of whom commendation is praise indeed, and congratulated by Mr. Birrell, who as a rule has nothing better to say of front-bench men than that they are eaten up with conceit and vanity, and that though styled statesmen by themselves, they are, in truth, merely politicians with a salary. Commentators of the school of Mr. T. P. O'Connor are evidently of opinion that Mr. Wyndham's physical gifts were the cause of his success in a

field where his colleagues had encountered nothing but disaster. Perhaps the writer of a ladies' novelette could do justice to the Under Secretary's good looks and chivalrous demeanour and the thrilling tones of his fine, rich voice. He is certainly one of the most attractive political personalities of the day, and his s ccess may indeed be partly due to the fact that everybody wishes him to be fortunate. But Mr. Wyndham in making his speech enjoyed a further advantage. Not one of the members of the Government who spoke earlier in the debate had exhibited any sense of the gravity of the crisis. Coming after the recriminatory and shuffling and semi-jocose observations of his colleagues, Mr. Wyndham's vindication of the War Office impressed the House as an earnest attempt to meet reasonable criticism and to rise to the height of an emergency. The House of Commons, happily, seldom fails in its appreciation of sincerity.

Lord Salisbury has now attained the allotted span. He celebrated his seventieth birthday on Saturday last. Some of his so-called political supporters are heartless enough to suggest that the Prime Minister should give the words of the Psalmist a personal application. It seems to be certain that should he stick to the post of duty the Prime Minister will find the remaining years of his administration a time of labour and sorrow. His reputation, which was at its zenith in 1895, appears now to have fallen to its nadir. In the House of Commons the other night a remark of Sir Edward Clarke to the effect that the whole country had faith in Lord Salisbury was received in chilling silence. The truth is that after his speech on the opening night of the Session, faith in Lord Salisbury was deleted from the Tory creed. His apologies, a night or two later to the Treasury, and to Sir Michael Hicks Beach and Sir Francis Mowat completed the disillusion. Those who in former days were his most discriminating admirers are now openly proclaiming that the Prime Minister is past his work and must give way to a more vigorous successor. Lord Salisbury however is not yet so debilitated as to be blind to the motive and origin of the clamour. Hatfield, it is to be hoped, will never surrender to Highbury.

When Sir Edward Clarke advised the retirement of Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Alfred Milner, pending a settlement of the South African war, his neighbours on the Ministerial benches smiled; and when he went on to suggest that Lord Rosebery should be invited to take the High Commissioner's place they laughed outright, and next day their merriment was echoed in the leading columns of the Unionist press. Some people have either extremely short memories or very little penetration. The proposal now revived by Sir Edward Clarke was originally foreshadowed on the eve of the war by Lord Tweedmouth, who came to the public meeting at which it was made straight from an interview with Lord Rosebery. It is, indeed, almost certain that had President Kruger not issued his unfortunate ultimatum the ex-Premier would now have been in South Africa armed with plenipotentiary powers to arrange a settlement of the whole controversy.

By the election of Mr. John Redmond to the position of chairman of the reunited Irish party, the Nationalists have signified to the world their return to the principles by which they were governed up to 1886. In other words, they resume their independence of political parties in this country. Mr. Redmond made his first speech as the new leader in the House of Commons yesterday, when he proposed an anti-war amendment which was eventually rejected by a majority of 302. "O daughter of Babylon," quoted Mr. Redmond, apostrophising England in her struggle with the Boers, "blessed be he who shall repay thee what thou hast paid unto us!" Later in the debate Mr. Healy, in the course of a blistering attack on British Pharisaism, acclaimed Spion Kop as a consolation for the defeat of the Home Rule Bill. So that, as one of the indirect results of the war, we are to witness in the current Session a vehement revival of the old, weary strife of racial animosities between England and Ireland.

Plague Mortality in Bombay.—A Reuter's telegram dated Bombay, Wednesday, says:—"The number of deaths at Bombay yesterday amounted to the unprecedented total of 408. The worst previous record for a day was 392. Other diseases, including small-pox, are also epidemic. The position of matters is aggravated by the advent of famine refugees."

NOTES FROM BOMBAY.

THE NEW FAMINE POLICY.

[From an Indian Correspondent.]

Bombay, January 20.

The week has been of a quiescent character, but the growing severity of famine still engages the attention of the public. Enough has been said by the *Statesman* on the subject to convince the meanest intelligence that the new policy announced by the Government of India in Mr. Holderness's Circular is opposed to facts and calculated to shake the confidence of the public in the ability of the Government to cope with the famine and prevent mortality from starvation. To judge from the further statements made on the subject by Mr. Ibbetson in the Imperial Legislative Council yesterday, it is evident that the authorities are alarmed. They will not commit themselves to any reliable estimates of famine expenditure up to the end of the current financial year, though they loosely speak of the amount not being anything short of three to four millions Rx. But I fear the entire expenditure up to the close of the famine is likely to be nearer eight to ten millions Rx. than three or four. How the Government will, at Budget time, propose ways and means to meet the total expenditure remains to be seen. Of course the saving of expense in connexion with the troops now in the field in South Africa will give some relief to the Treasury—perhaps half a million Rx. But, on the other hand, the land revenue will again suffer, though it may be observed that since the last famine the income from this source has improved to the extent of about four to five millions of rupees. Exchange has remained steady and far above the minimum estimated in the Budget. There will be a big saving under this head, which will in all probability go to square expenditure with income. Or it may be that there will be a small deficit. At the same time the authorities will have to make provision for those on relief works from March till July at the least.

Be this as it may, I cannot get rid of the thought that all the talk about the so-called demoralisation of the masses and the consequent tendency to go on relief works in increasing numbers is simply unfounded. There is not a people on the face of the earth who are slower to go on relief works and avail themselves of State charity. On the contrary, the striking trait of Indian character, to which a long line of careful observers have borne ample testimony, is their reluctance to accept any charity till driven to it by dire distress and privation. Such being the national character, is it not insulting for the central authority, which ought to be better informed, to lay this charge at the door of a long-suffering and patient population? On behalf of my countrymen I repudiate the charge in the most emphatic terms and challenge the propagators of it to prove it. It is indeed a matter of deep regret that the Indian Government should have promulgated the Resolution in question. We are amazed that a Viceroy who has more than once given credit to the masses for their exemplary patience amid the most calamitous visitations should have given his assent to a theory which will not bear examination. I repeat what I have previously said, that the true cause of the people's resorting to relief camps in larger numbers is to be found in their exhausted resources. They had no breathing space in which to recuperate after the last famine. On the contrary, Shylock-like, the tax-gatherer went about collecting the arrears with rigour, so much so that even the Lyall Famine Commission was obliged to remark that the remissions of 1896-7 compared with those of 1876-7 were insignificant; and this, too, in spite of the admitted severity of the last famine. If people flock during the prevailing famine to relief works in larger numbers than before there is nothing to cause surprise. It is the natural consequence of the economic condition which has prevailed in the country since 1896-97. Had the Government of India gone about with eyes and ears open through the country, it might have discovered for itself a fact so patent to everybody else. Such is the ignorance of our rulers. Yet when they find that with increasing numbers a larger expenditure will have to be incurred, they grow alarmed and try to cut down relief wages and inculcate lessons of "economy" to officials who thoroughly understand the situation but who, because of their position, are not able to utter the truth that rises to their lips. This Circular Letter of the Government of

India does little credit to the statesmanship of Lord Curzon. Statesmanship is tested in this country only in crucial times. It is then only that we are able to find out whether the Viceroy for the time being is capable of discharging his duties. Had Lord Curzon endeavoured to discover the true cause of the increasing numbers on relief works, he would never have allowed that specious and hollow Letter to be published with his authority and consent.

But the authorities are now thinking more and more of bolstering up their gold currency, instead of concentrating their energies on the relief of starvation and distress. They have already purchased and stored nearly ten millions of gold, and have again created, into the bargain, an artificial stringency in the money market—a stringency aggravated by the bungling of the India Office in the matter of telegraphic transfer bills. As I write, the banks are borrowing at eight and nine per cent. There is yet a large sum to finance the Burma rice crop, and till that is financed (that is, till the middle of next month), there is no chance of any mitigation of the present stringency which, coming on the top of the already depressed condition, makes the commercial situation extremely gloomy. There is loud complaint touching the way in which the India Office has treated the banking public in the matter of telegraphic transfers. It is alleged that the Secretary of State has committed "a breach of faith" with the public. That functionary will later have to justify the course he has pursued.

Reuter telegraphed the other day that Lord Northcote, in responding to the toast of his health at the Northbrook Club, expressed the opinion that the bonds of loyalty would be brought closer by expanding the trade of India. This is a truism which needs no demonstration. The *Advocate of India* remarks that that was the opinion given half-a-century ago by John Bright, and that Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji has been saying it, in season and out of season, for the last thirty years. He repeated the view last year in Lancashire and in Yorkshire that British trade with India is only two shillings per head when it might be twenty shillings with a decrease in the burdens of the foreign agency and the cessation of the economic drain of wealth from India. It is well if this aspect of the matter has come to occupy the attention of English politicians.

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.

NEARLY FOUR MILLIONS ON RELIEF.

The Secretary of State for India has received (February 5) the following telegram from the Viceroy on the subject of the famine:—

General rain has again fallen in North-Western Provinces and Oudh and Punjab, also in part of Central India. Fodder and water scarce in parts of Central Provinces, Bombay, Punjab, Rajputana. Prices stationary. Number of persons in receipt of relief:—Bombay, 876,000; Punjab, 162,000; Central Provinces, 1,476,000; Berar, 297,000; Ajmer-Merwara, 98,000; Rajputana States, 329,000; Central India States, 107,000; Bombay Native States, 343,000; Baroda, 65,000; North-West Provinces, 4,000; Punjab Native States, 2,000. Total, 3,759,000.

THE MANSION HOUSE FUND.

In addition to Messrs. Glyn, Mills, and Co., the London and County Bank, Messrs. Grindlay and Co., of 54, Parliament Street, and Messrs. Henry S. King and Co., of Cornhill and Pall Mall, have offered to receive donations for the Mansion House Fund. About £12,500 has already been collected.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN'S PROPOSAL FOR A VILLAGE ENQUIRY.

With reference to Sir W. Wedderburn's proposed amendment to the Address, the following Memorandum was on Wednesday circulated to all members of the House of Commons:—

I have put down the following Amendment on the Address:—

To add,—"And we humbly pray that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to direct that, in view of the grievous sufferings which are again afflicting the people of India, a detailed and searching village enquiry be instituted, in order to ascertain the causes which impair the cultivators' powers to resist the attacks of famine and plague."

In January, 1897, and in August, 1897, I moved a similar resolution with reference to the late famine, but without success. I submit that the reappearance of famine in India, after so brief an interval, and upon so great a scale, should ensure careful consideration for any plan, however modest, which seeks to ascertain, and if possible remove, some of the causes of famine.

As to the terrible magnitude of the present famine, there is no disagreement. Already nearly four millions of persons are upon relief. Mr. Ibbetson, the Home member of the Viceroy's Council, stated in Council in the second week of January last that the aggregate of the true famine area was 300,000 square miles, with a population of forty millions; that there was a further area of 145,000 miles, with a population of twenty-one millions, where more or less general scarcity and distress prevailed; and that the expenditure upon famine relief up to March 31 would be over three millions Rx. Mr. Ibbetson said that in certain parts of the affected districts the present drought was without a parallel in extent and intensity; and he added:—"In a large portion of the area affected it follows close upon a famine of great severity, and is accompanied by an unprecedented scarcity of fodder and water. There seems reason to fear that in many places the destitution has reached or will reach a higher stratum of society than has ever been affected before since the country came under the British."

In these circumstances the efforts of the Government of India, and the donations of the charitable public in India and at home, are directed to the mitigation of the immediate suffering which the famine involves. Is it not incumbent upon Parliament to go somewhat further and endeavour to ascertain, and, if possible, remove the causes, not indeed of scarcity, but of the helplessness of the Indian peasant when scarcity occurs? To this end I believe that a detailed enquiry, of the kind which I propose, into the condition of a few selected villages must yield valuable information as to the rayats' economic position and needs. To repeat what I have urged on previous occasions, the rural villages in India include 80 per cent. of the population, and the village community is the microcosm of all India. If therefore means can be found to make one village prosperous a clue will be obtained to the means of making all India prosperous. For such an investigation no Imperial Commission is required, no one need be sent out from England, no one need be withdrawn from famine duty, and no expense worth mentioning need be incurred. In each Province I would suggest that the local administration should select typical villages, and appoint a representative Committee of experienced men, official and non-official, European and Indian, to make a thorough, impartial, and fearless diagnosis of their condition. The investigation should be of a minute and even microscopic kind, to detect the microbes which blight the rayat's industry.

I trust that in asking for this modest enquiry I may receive the support of hon. members interested in the welfare of India.

House of Commons, W. WEDDERBURN.
February 7, 1900.

THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA'S CIRCULAR.

Mr. T. W. Holderness, Secretary to the Government of India, has addressed the following Circular, dated Calcutta, December 27, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay, to the Secretary to the Government of the Punjab, to the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces, to the Chief Commissioner of Ajmere, and to the Resident at Hyderabad:—I am directed to address you on the subject of the famine relief measures which are being undertaken, or may possibly be undertaken, in various parts of India. The gravity of the situation already created by the failure of the autumn rains, and the fear that through the absence of the winter rains the drought of the affected area may be greatly enlarged, and the certainty that during the next six months great demands will be made on the public revenues for famine relief, have caused the Government of India to scrutinise with more than ordinary care the weekly returns of relief operations. They perceive with some anxiety that the numbers on relief in British India and in the Native States are rapidly increasing that they already exceed two and a quarter millions of persons, although relief operations are in most provinces still in the preliminary stage. If the present rate of progression is long maintained, the crowds on relief will far exceed the record of any previous famine, and will strain not only the finances but also the administrative resources of the Government.

AN UNPRECEDENTED EXPERIENCE.

These considerations impel the Governor-General in Council to invite Local Governments to seriously consider with him whether the principles or practice of famine relief have in any particular or particulars been imperceptibly relaxed, and whether the extreme readiness which the people have evinced to throw themselves on the charity of the State and to avail themselves of every form of relief, does not require corresponding strictness on the part of those charged with the duty of administering it. The fact is not overlooked that the circumstances of the present drought are in some ways unprecedented. Since famine began to be administered on a methodical system there has been no instance of any province being twice smitten by extreme drought in so short a space of time as three years, nor is there any previous instance of such widespread mortality among cattle as has this year occurred, carrying with it ruin to classes superior to those from which relief workers are ordinarily drawn; and there has rarely been a drought which unmistakably declared itself so early in the year or necessitated so early a resort to relief. All these circumstances make the Governor-General in Council

reluctant to commit himself at all prematurely to the conclusion that the exceptionally large numbers on relief returned in the present famine mean that aid is being too freely given, and that tests and precautions are insufficiently observed; but at all events they are remarkable enough to call for close examination and very serious thought.

THE FAMINE COMMISSION'S STANDARD.

The Famine Commission of 1878, in advocating the present system of famine relief, and in maintaining that it would not exceed the financial resources of the Indian Government, were of opinion that in famine the proportion of the total population likely to be in receipt of relief in the worst months would not exceed fifteen per cent., and for the whole period would not exceed seven or eight per cent. In the 1896-97 famine these standards (Report, paragraphs 345 to 348), as the recent Famine Commission showed, were on the whole not exceeded. They were, however, exceeded in particular tracts. The Commission observed with regard to these cases that they suggest the necessity for carefully enforcing the conditions and restrictions prescribed by the Code. Appended to this letter is a table showing the numbers on relief in each District and Native State and, according to the latest returns, the ratios they bear to the population. A similar table showing the numbers on relief and the percentage and ratios in the third week of January, 1897, is added for comparative purposes. To compare the figures for the particular districts in the two tables would be tedious, and might be fallacious without reference to the particular qualifying circumstances. But the broad deduction which may certainly be drawn from the contrasted tables (having regard especially to the fact that the point taken in the 1896-97 famine is six weeks later than that taken in the present famine) is that relief this year is in many places being distributed on a vastly greater scale than in 1896-97. Already the ratio of persons relieved to the population in a number of districts exceeds the standard of fifteen per cent. laid down by the Famine Commission in 1878, as the maximum for the worst months of the year. When this is the case at the very outset of the famine, it is impossible to predict to what height the numbers may rise in succeeding months. The assurance hitherto entertained as to the financial soundness of the famine relief system is thus gravely shaken. The question necessarily arises whether there are not undue prodigality and profusion in the relief at present being dispensed, and whether proper care is being exercised to confine it to the absolutely destitute section of the population.

OBLIGATIONS OF THE PEOPLE.

First of all, it appears desirable to reaffirm the underlying principle of famine relief, that the State does not undertake to secure the people from all suffering in the event of failure of crops, but only to protect them from starvation. Secondly, the conditions of relief should be such as to fully test the necessity of the recipient, and to impair as little as possible the traditional family obligations and the social system of the country in the administration of gratuitous relief in the homes of the people, which in one province has attained extraordinarily high proportions. These principles should be insisted on with especial rigour. The Governor-General in Council is aware that in spite of all the rules and definitions, a selection of really necessitous cases for this form of relief is extremely difficult. In the special case of the Central Provinces, with a large population disposed to wander from their homes in adverse seasons, with the memories of the late famine still fresh, liberality in the matter of home relief was probably politic in the first stage of distress, when relief works were not as yet in being, and there was still hope of rain. But these conditions no longer exist. The curtailment of gratuitous lists in certain districts now appears to be a matter of urgent necessity; in others some increase on the present figures is no doubt unavoidable as the distress spreads, but in these also incessant vigilance will be necessary with regard to persons capable of labour. The two principles, on which insistence is necessary, are that the terms on which the work is offered shall be such as will adequately test the need of the applicants; and that the wage shall not exceed the amount needful for the subsistence of the worker.

LARGE WORKS OF UTILITY.

The recommendation of the Famine Commission of 1878 that large works of public utility under professional supervision should form the backbone of relief has been reaffirmed by the recent Commission, though the latter have recognised exceptions in favour of small works in certain specified circumstances. The Governor-General in Council will not here discuss these exceptions, but would observe that the case for small and scattered works in preference to large works in any locality, or at any particular season of the year, requires favourably to be made out on special grounds to the satisfaction of the Local Government. Special circumstances, the Governor-General in Council believes, caused small works to be largely utilised in the Central Provinces in the first stage of the present scarcity, but now that these conditions have ceased to exist, the time has come for concentrating labour on large works wherever these can be devised, and for closing the small works except in so far as they may be required for the relief of aboriginal tribes or by other exceptional circumstances. In no other way can an effective supervision of the enforcement of the labour test over three-quarters of a million of relief workers be secured by the establishments at our disposal. In no other way can there be any assurance that we may not have half the population ultimately on our hands, attracted as otherwise they would be, by facile opportunities for earning at their very doors a daily wage for a nominal task. In a year of drought there is widespread enforced idleness throughout the country, and exceptional readiness to accept light work for very low wages; but it does not follow that every candidate for labour on such terms is at the end of his resources. To test this, large works are imperatively needed when the persons on relief reach the numbers recorded at the present time in the Central Provinces, the Berars, and Ajmere.

THE TASK SYSTEM.

The principle that the wage earnable by the relief worker shall be a subsistence wage only, as laid down by the Famine Commission of 1878, has not been questioned by the later Famine Commission, but the latter body has recommended a wage scale for general adoption which, it is admitted, is considerably in excess of the wages actually paid in the late Famine in several provinces. Opinions received from local Governments on the Commission's wage scale lead the Government of India to apprehend that it will prove dangerously high, especially whenever the task system is employed and the prescriptive minimum of the daily wage is rigorously observed. Under this system every member of the family, from the child in arms upwards, is secured a daily wage irrespective of the task. Joint earnings by a family on the scale proposed by the Commission will be undoubtedly most attractive to the Indian population, and will not improbably exceed its actual requirements. The Commission were not unmindful that their wage scale might on occasions be found too high, and have provided a means of reducing it by the expedient described in paragraph 459 of their report. This expedient is suitable enough as an easy means of temporarily lowering, for special reasons, the wage scale which is ordinarily not excessive; but it is a bad remedy for a wage scale which ordinarily is excessive. The Governor-General in Council considers the objections taken to the Commission's scale by the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, in his letter No. 548, dated October 9, 1899, to be very weighty, and has already authorised the local Government to prescribe a considerably lower scale, though not so low a scale as was in force in the Province in 1896-97. Authority is now given to the other local Governments to experimentally adopt the scale accepted for the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, should they consider the Commission's scale unnecessarily liberal. It is hoped that the experience of the present famine will make a final settlement of this difficult question possible.

REVISION OF WAGE SCALE.

It is observed that the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces has already consulted his officers as to whether the wages recommended by the Famine Commission introduced into his Province are not unnecessarily high. The Government of India would be glad to learn the result of this enquiry. They give the Chief Commissioner the fullest discretion to adopt the North-Western Provinces scale, or to lower the Commission's scale by the expedient suggested by the Commission, either throughout the Province at large or on particular works or groups of works which appear to be attracting persons not in immediate need of relief. There is comparatively little risk in doing this in the present famine, since all the evidence points to the fact that the distress has everywhere been taken in time, that the people are in excellent condition, and that the aimless wandering and destitution which marked the earlier stages of the late famine in the Central Provinces do not exist. In any case the risk is a perfectly legitimate one for the local Government to take, if, as should be the case, its information is good, and it is prompt to revise its action should it find that the economy has been pushed too far. The opinion of the Famine Commission that specially low wages are required for village works for jungle tribes employed on nominal tasks should in this connexion not be overlooked. It must be remembered also that the actual wage depends upon the price rate no less than upon the grain basis. To adopt current rates for grain of a description superior to or a quality higher than that actually used by the classes from which the recipients of relief are drawn, will render of no avail the most careful adjustment of the grain scale.

PAYMENT BY RESULTS.

The many objections to which the system of a fixed task minimum wage is open are obvious. So serious are they that during the 1896-97 famine most provinces, as the Famine Commission stated, found it necessary at some time or another during the relief operations to substitute for it some form or other of payment by results. The Famine Commission have described at length several of these expedients, and have pronounced them to be permissible, though they express the opinion that when the distress is acute the regular Code system is the only one which can safely be adopted, if the safeguards mentioned by the Famine Commission are properly observed. The Government of India think that some such system of payment by results, as was employed in most districts of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh during the worst months of famine, under the title of "modified intermediate system" is well calculated to give sufficient relief, except in a very acute and advanced stage of distress. Most Provincial Codes now provide for the adoption of some form of payment by results in place of the regular Code system. The Government of India trust that full use will, at the outset of relief operations, be made of these alternative systems, and that they will not be abandoned in favour of the regular system until they have been found to be insufficient. When it becomes necessary to resort to a system of fixed task and minimum wage, fines for short work should be strictly enforced, and cases of persistent failure to perform an allotted task, due to causes other than physical inability, must be dealt with rigorously. The provisions of the wage-scale sanctioned for the North-Western Provinces and Oudh regarding the penal wage may be consulted with advantage. The Government of India have no desire to drive hard bargains with relief-workers, to get the work done at unduly low rates, or to impose tasks beyond the capacity of the labourers; but a minimum wage system is so easily productive of abuse that it is essential to confine its use to cases in which no other system is adequate, and to safeguard it by all precautions which are not inconsistent with the principle upon which it is based.

THE LIMITS OF STATE RELIEF.

In the foregoing remarks the Governor-General in Council has thought it right to indicate the dangers which seem to him to beset the administration of famine relief in the highly developed system which it has of late assumed. In former days the difficulty was to induce the people to avail themselves of the relief offered in unfamiliar forms. On the present occasion their experience in the recent famine has made the people only too ready to expect relief and

to accept it on the conditions to which it is subject. The difficulty is to discriminate between the really necessitous and those who can support themselves or obtain support from others. There is a possible tendency to overlook this distinction, and to forget the limits within which State relief should be confined. Natural social obligations exist which, if duly discharged, should prevent many persons from needing such relief. It is desirable that these obligations should not be impaired, and that the landholder should be encouraged to support his farm labourer, the agricultural village its poor, and the town its beggars and its decayed classes.

THE VICEROY'S POSITION.

The Governor-General in Council is anxious that his position should not be misunderstood. From the time the rains failed he recognised that famine relief on a very large scale would be necessary and he fully approved of the prompt action taken in several provinces to organise it. He has the fullest sympathy with the zeal and devotion of the officers who are administering it. He shares the anxiety of the Local Governments that relief shall be made accessible from the outset to the people. But the famine relief system, admirable though it is, may have defects. If such defects exist and are not remedied, they will undermine the whole system. It is because the Governor-General in Council is impressed with this imminent danger that he asks the Local Governments to consider whether greater strictness in enforcing the conditions of relief tests of the distress is not required. In any well-considered measures that they may take to secure this end, they may rely upon his concurrence and support.

MR. H. N. HARIDAS ON THE SITUATION IN INDIA.

We take the following from the *Derbyshire Telephone*:—

Bombay, January 5, 1900.

Dear Mr. Smedley,—You and all well-wishers of India will be pleased to learn that the "Natu brothers" who were in prison as political prisoners, have been at last released by the Government. They were arrested about the middle of the year 1897 under an obsolete and unconstitutional act of the Bombay Legislature. They were not accused of any offence against the law, but were kept so long under confinement without any trial. They are now released, but still we do not know why they were arrested, on whose motion or on what evidence.

I think the public have a right to demand an explanation. I think we should at once demand the immediate repeal of an Act, which places in the hands of irresponsible officialdom such arbitrary powers. Our persons and property are not safe, and we can only be called constructive slaves under the present law. If the Liberals want to win the confidence and the gratitude of the three hundred millions of people of India, let them agitate unceasingly for the removal of this law from the Statute Book of India.

The English people were so shocked at the "Dreyfus Scandal," let them now see that no more Indian Dreyfuses suffer at the hands of their countrymen. If the present law, with regard to the trial of prisoners, is defective let it be amended, but surely let no one in future be condemned without a trial. Even Dreyfus had some sort of a trial. But the Natu brothers who were kept in prison so long had none. Neither have they ever been charged with any breach of the law.

The famine is now raging worse than ever. The extent of suffering is much larger than during the famine of 1897. At present three millions of human beings are on relief works, and I dare say there are as many more starving. I think that the actual number starving cannot be less than seven millions.

The large number now on relief work at the commencement of the famine have frightened the Government of Lord Curzon, for they have recently issued a notification, the object of which is to inform the district officials that they must deal out relief with a very stingy hand. This notification exposes to the full light of day the utter inability of the Government to cope with the present crisis, and shows up the hollowness of the Budget speeches made in the House of Commons proclaiming the wonderful elasticity with which India has recovered itself from the effects of the last famine of two years ago. How easy it is to gull the House of Commons and the country with such clap-trap. The men making the speeches knew they were false.

Where is the ever financially flourishing India referred to in those speeches? In its stead we see the sorry spectacle of millions of human beings starving to death within only a couple of months of the rainy season, and a sadder and most heart-rending spectacle of a civilised Government conscious of its utter helplessness is not to be found. It is not human beings alone who are dying, tens of thousands of cattle are dying for want of fodder. Add to this, all the wells are drying up, and it is feared by those who know that we shall have a water famine before very long. You have been to India and can well understand what all this means.

I am sorry to say the plague has not yet abated. The administration of India is rotten to the core, and a searching enquiry is absolutely necessary. People say, and with justice, if the Government take all our taxes in good times they should help us in bad times. If when plague and famine carry away tens of thousands of men, women and children, and the Government are unable to grapple with a state of things like this, where and who are the people to look for help. I do hope the *Telephone* and other papers will speak out.

Kind regards to all Belper friends,

Yours truly,

H. N. HARIDAS.

Imperial Parliament.

Thursday, February 1.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

Government of India Act, 1858,—Copy presented of Order in Council of November 28, 1899, approving a Statement of new and revised appointments, alterations of salaries, and abolition of appointment in the Establishment of the Secretary of State for India in Council [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

INDIAN TROOPS OUT OF INDIA.

Sir CHARLES DILKE asked the Secretary of State for India, what forces, in reduction of the Indian establishment, were now serving out of India.

Lord G. HAMILTON: There are at present in South Africa, in reduction of the Indian establishment, two batteries of Horse Artillery, three batteries of Field Artillery, four regiments of British cavalry, and four battalions of British infantry. Besides these, one battalion of Native infantry is serving in Mauritius and another is under orders to proceed to that colony; and another is under orders for Ceylon, and another for Singapore.

Sir CHARLES DILKE asked the Under-Secretary of State for War, what was the composition of the black battalion, additional to the Indian battalion, which was at Mauritius in garrison:

And, what statement was ever made to Parliament with regard to its recruitment or service.

Lord G. HAMILTON said that the garrison militia at Mauritius was composed of the 1st Regiment of Bengal Infantry and the 27th Regiment of Madras Infantry. The black battalion no longer formed a part of the garrison.

NATIVE INDIAN TROOPS AND THE WAR.

Mr. BAINBRIDGE asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the fact that the campaign in South Africa had now assumed a grave relation to the important question of the maintenance of the British Empire, the Government would reconsider their expressed intention of not making use of the Native Indian troops, especially in view of the special adaptability of Goorkha and Sikh regiments to the African climate, and of the probability of such regiments being brought into use in case of an invasion of Northern India, whether by white or coloured troops.

Mr. BALFOUR: For reasons which the House I think understands and thoroughly appreciates it is not the intention of the Government to use Native troops in Africa, but the hon. gentleman appears to assume by the last clause of his question that Native troops are not even to be used in the defence of India against any attack by any European Power. That, of course, is not the case. (Cheers.)

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.

Sir WILLIAM WEDDERBURN asked the Secretary of State for India whether he could state the number of persons now on famine relief in the affected districts of India, the extent of the area and the population affected, and the estimated cost of relief up to March 31 and afterwards:

And whether he would now suggest to the Lord Mayor of London the expediency of opening a Mansion House Fund for subscriptions in this country.

Lord G. HAMILTON: The number of persons in receipt of famine relief in India at the end of January is approximately 3,500,000. The population affected by the famine is estimated at 49 millions, of which 22 millions are in territory administered by the British Government and 27 millions in the territories of Native Princes. The area affected is about 550,000 square miles, of which 150,000 are in British territory and 400,000 in Native territory. The relief expenditure up to the end of March, 1900, is calculated to be between three and four crores of rupees. No accurate estimate of the probable relief expenditure after that date can at present be made.

As regards the last part of the question, I would refer the hon. baronet to the correspondence which has passed between the Lord Mayor and myself on the subject.

Friday, February 2.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE AMIR'S SUBSIDY.

Mr. LLOYD MORGAN, on behalf of Mr. BAINBRIDGE, asked the Secretary of State for India, whether any account was given by the Afghan Government of the manner in which the sum of £130,000 or thereabouts (which was annually paid to that Government) was expended, and whether an account of such expenditure could be presented to the House.

Lord G. HAMILTON: The terms of the agreement with his Highness the Amir dated November 12, 1893, presented to Parliament in 1896, do not impose any obligation upon his Highness to render any account of his expenditure of the subsidy of 18 lakhs, and no such account is given.

FRONTIER POLICY.

Mr. LLOYD MORGAN, on behalf of Mr. BAINBRIDGE, asked the Secretary of State for India whether, in view of the recent experience in Natal and Cape Colony proving the practical invulnerability of a well fortified range of mountains to an invading force whose base was at a great distance, the large payment to Afghanistan would be suspended and the whole or part of the money spent on strengthening the forts and increasing the armaments on the frontier.

Lord G. HAMILTON: The terms of the agreement dated November 12, 1893, would not justify any such diversion of the subsidy as the hon. gentleman suggests.

Monday, February 5.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

INDIAN TROOPS OUTSIDE THE FRONTIER.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked the Secretary of State for India, whether the whole of the expenses of the Indian troops in Mauritius, Ceylon, Singapore, and elsewhere outside the frontier of India, owing to the South African war, would be borne by the British Exchequer.

Lord G. HAMILTON: The whole of the expenses of the Indian troops in Mauritius, Ceylon, Singapore, and elsewhere outside the frontier of India will be debited to Imperial revenue.

Tuesday, February 6.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PETITION.

Anti-Shanars Riots,—Petition of Shanar inhabitants of Tenkasi and other places, South India, for redress of grievances; to lie upon the Table.

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.

Mr. S. SMITH gave notice that on March 7 he would call attention to the famine in India, and move a resolution.

THE BORROWED TROOPS.

Mr. WARNER asked the Under-Secretary for War if any steps were being taken to replace the British troops who had been withdrawn from India for South Africa.

Mr. WYNDHAM: Not at present.

RUSSIA AND PERSIA.

Mr. YERBURGH asked the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether he could state the conditions of the Russian loan to Persia, and whether the Customs of the port of Bandar Abbas were pledged to Russia under any agreement.

Mr. BRODRICK: The conditions of the loan, as announced in the *Messager Officiel* on January 30 and published in the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg* of January 31, are:—The payment of the interest and sinking fund for the term of 75 years is to be guaranteed by all the Customs revenues of Persia, exclusive of those of Fars and the Persian Gulf ports. In case of delay in the payments of the service of the loan, the Banque des Prêts is to have the right of establishing a control over the Custom-houses, the revenues of which form the security for the loan. The Persian Government engages to extinguish all its previous external obligations with part of the proceeds of the loan, and not to conclude without the consent of the Banque des Prêts any fresh foreign loan until the loan of 1900 has been extinguished. The Persian Government grants the Banque des Prêts the right, if it thinks necessary, of placing on the money market bonds of the Persian loan for the amount to which it is indebted, and bearing the full guarantee of the Russian Government. We have no ground for believing in the existence of any agreement to the effect mentioned in the second paragraph.

NOTICES OF MOTION.

The following Notices of Motion appear on the Order Paper of the House of Commons:—

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS: As an amendment to the Address, at end, add—And we humbly represent to your Majesty that the constantly recurring and costly famines in India demand the relief of the Indian Exchequer from some portion of the large military expenditure incurred by the maintenance of 75,000 British troops as an Indian garrison; and whereas nearly 10,000 of these troops have been withdrawn for service in South Africa, which has been justified by the spontaneous and universal manifestations of loyalty evoked throughout India by the war, we pray that 20,000 of the British troops stationed in India shall in future be treated as a reserve force for your Majesty's Empire in the East generally, and shall be charged upon the Imperial Revenues.

Sir WILLIAM WEDDERBURN: As an amendment to the Address, at end, add—And we humbly pray that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to direct that, in view of the grievous sufferings which are again afflicting the people of India, a detailed and searching village enquiry be instituted, in order to ascertain the causes which impair the cultivators' powers to resist the attacks of famine and plague.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS.

Notice has been given of the following questions:—

Sir MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE: To ask the Secretary of State for India, if he can inform the House when the Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure is likely to be issued. (Thursday, February, 8.)

Sir WILLIAM WEDDERBURN: To ask the Secretary of State for India, whether his attention has been drawn to an allegation contained in a Circular Letter, dated December 27 last, from the Government of India to the Local Governments, to the effect that the people in the famine districts are extremely ready to throw themselves on the charity of the State, and to avail themselves of every form of relief:

Whether he is aware that this statement has excited dissatisfaction in India:

And, whether he will state the evidence upon which the allegation is made, and since what period it is suggested that this feature has developed itself. (Thursday, February 8.)

Sir WILLIAM WEDDERBURN: To ask the Secretary of State for India, whether the release of the Natu brothers is unconditional:

And, whether in view of the conspicuous loyalty exhibited by the Indian people at this critical time, he will make a statement regarding the Natus which will satisfy the public that the measures taken in their case were prudent and necessary. (Thursday, February 8.)

Mr. CHANNING,—To ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether the War Office has obtained from Indian factories a large quantity of boots for the use of the troops in South Africa:

What number of pairs of boots have been thus obtained:

At what price they have been supplied, and at what prices army boots, both hand sewn and machine made, have been contracted for this past year in Northamptonshire and other shoe manufacturing districts in England:

Whether very large tenders of boots have been made by English firms this past year, and only small orders placed with such firms on the ground of price:

Whether it was found that the Indian-made boots supplied to Lord Kitchener's forces in the Sudan proved unsatisfactory, while English-made wire sewn and rivetted boots stood the campaign exceedingly well: and whether the leather out of which Indian boots are made is thinner, and therefore unsuitable for rough travelling in stony country:

Whether the Indian boots supplied to the South Africa forces were, before the decision to purchase, submitted to the usual examination of the army boot inspectors in this country:

And whether, in arranging for the present and future requirements of the troops, the War Office will take the proper steps to secure the soundest and strongest boots from approved English firms at a fair price, having regard to the increase in the price of sound leather and to the cost of British labour. [Thursday, February 8.]

THE SKELETON AT THE FEAST.

The *Dean Forest Mercury* (in a recent issue) says:—No one now doubts that an Indian famine is upon us in a most acute form, and all resources public and private must be strained to the utmost in order to mitigate the calamity. But do what we will death and suffering will be widespread. Can nothing be done as regards the future to ward off such disasters? Prevention is better than cure—much better than mitigation. Cannot something be done beforehand to strengthen the feeble knees of the rayat, and make him more able to resist when the bad time comes? I most firmly believe that much may be done. Also I believe that now is the opportunity to impress this truth upon the public mind. For the attention of the British public is, for the moment at least, directed to India; its sympathy is aroused; and all the death and suffering will not be altogether in vain if the nation can be induced to open its eyes to the true condition of India, to distinguish between the symptoms and the disease, and to insist sternly on the removal of the causes which produce the disease. As a humble contribution towards an understanding of the facts, I put forward the following propositions: i. That the excessive mortality of an Indian famine is due to the extreme poverty of the rural population, who do not possess a store of food, money, or credit, sufficient to tide over one failure of harvest; ii. That practically mortality from famine would be prevented if the population had such a store of food, money, or credit; iii. That with reasonable reform in the administration, the rayat would not only be in a position to possess such a store, but he might even become moderately prosperous; iv. That the India Office, as at present constituted, will neither initiate these necessary reforms itself, nor will it allow others to carry them out.

The foregoing paragraph is the opening one of an able article contributed to INDIA by our friend and neighbour, Sir William Wedderburn, Bart., M.P., a few months before the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, and anterior to the last great famine in India. Though the awful experience of famine was so recent and so great, yet the empire will shortly be in the throes of another, when it is estimated that nearly three millions will be the sufferers, and far more deaths be the result than even the ghastly conflict in South Africa will be answerable for. Yet, we appear to be no nearer a preventive of these terrible calamities. Prophets may prophesy, and friends beseech, but all to no purpose. Real friends of India like Sir William Wedderburn, have next to no chance. We, as a country, pretend to attach the highest possible value to our Indian Empire, and to value it above our other colonies, and yet Parliament persistently declines to give it proper or even decent consideration, and all that can be secured is a day or two at the fag end of the Session, when the House is empty. Days and weeks can be found to consider and vote doles to parsons, landlords, and for other iniquitous proceedings, which are worse than useless to the people generally, but a few hours have to suffice for the affairs of an empire. Our national interest must be hypocritical, or it would not be so. The lives of thousands upon thousands of poor Indian peasants are as dust in a balance, and do not count, and are of no import, only so far as it causes inconvenience. There will probably be greater sacrifice of life in the famine now on hand, than the last, for the means of sustenance obtained by public subscription—belated as it was last time, thanks to the cynical Indian Secretary of the present Government—will not be available this, all the available philanthropy being called upon for the bloody and unnecessary war in South Africa. Some day, perhaps, we shall get as rude an awakening in India as we have had in Africa, and we shall have about the same grounds for consolation. It will serve us right, too. In the meantime there must be an awful and unnecessary sacrifice of life—but, they are only poor rayats; what matter! Spend a few thousands on artificial means of relief, is all a short-sighted, unfeeling, and iniquitous Government can rise to.

NOW READY.

CONGRESS GREEN BOOK.—No. III.

The Proposed Separation OF Judicial and Executive Duties in India.

MEMORIAL

FROM

RT. HON. LORD HOBHOUSE, K.C.S.I.
(late Legal Member of the Viceroy's Council, Member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council).

RT. HON. SIR RICHARD GARTH, Q.C.
(late Chief Justice of Bengal).

RT. HON. SIR RICHARD COUCH
(late Chief Justice of Bengal, Member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council).

SIR CHARLES SARGENT
(late Chief Justice of Bombay.)

SIR WILLIAM MARKBY, K.C.I.E.
(late Judge of the High Court, Calcutta).

SIR JOHN BUDD PHEAR
(late Judge of the High Court, Calcutta, and Chief Justice of Ceylon).

SIR JOHN SCOTT, K.C.M.G.
(late Judge of the High Court, Bombay).

SIR W. WEDDERBURN, BART., M.P.
(late Judge of the High Court, Bombay).

SIR ROLAND K. WILSON, BART.
(late Reader in Indian Law at the University of Cambridge).

MR. HERBERT J. REYNOLDS, C.S.I.
(late Member of the Bengal Legislative Council).

TOGETHER WITH TWO APPENDICES.

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